Flame of Friendship

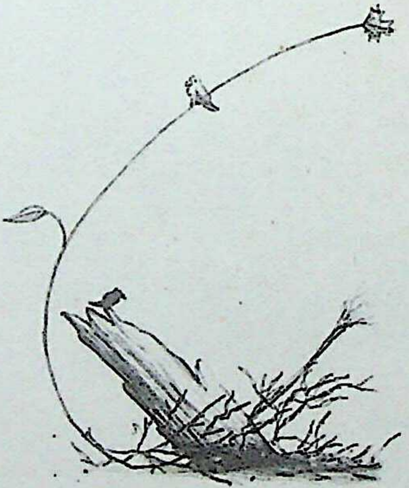
Reminiscence of Vimala Thakar

-Prabha Merchant

10-2

Flame of Friendship

(Reminiscence of VIMALA THAKAR)



Prabha Merchant

Translated by :
Prof. H. G. Chhikaniwala

FLAME OF FRIENDSHIP
(Reminiscence of VIMALA THAKAR)

By : Prabha Merchant

© Prabha Merchant

Writer & Publisher :
Prabha Merchant
4, Aagam Apartment,
B/h., Suvidha Shopping Center,
Paldi, Ahmedabad- 380 007,
Gujarat State, India
Phone : 079-26605897

First Edition : 15th April, 2010.

Design :
Siddharth Ramanuj
29/B Bansidhar Society,
B/h Jawaher Nagar,
Vasna, Ahmedabad,
Gujarat, INDIA.
email : ramanuj.v@gmail.com
Phone : 079-26603243

Laser Printing :
Kirit Ravat
Shri Bonanza Print Media
Phone : 09998151543

Printed By :
M. R. Graphics
Ahmedabad

At your Lotus feet

- Prabha
- Rajvi Vora

Dr. [illegible] Sharma Collection, Varanasi

Contents

6 Preface
7 Acknowledgements
8 Flame of Friendship
16 How Can I EverForget ?
19 Shri Rama
21 Shri Krishna
22 Shri Jnaneshvar and the Jnaneshvari Parayan
24 Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda
26 Tukadoji Maharaj
27 Chaitanya Mahaprabhu
28 Gandhiji
39 Vinobaji
30 Dada Dharmadhikari
31 J. Krishnamurti
32 Devaraha Baba
34 Gopinath Kaviraj
38 Travelling Abroad
41 Paralysis
43 Dalhousie
45 A Unique Initiation
47 Bhaiya
48 Mai, Loved by All !
56 Vimalaji's View of LIFE
60 The Sacred Lamp
61 The Flame of Love
62 The Friends
63 Loosing the Ego
64 The Flowering

Dr. Urmita Sharma Collection, Varanasi

PREFACE

How can I ever forget my beloved 'Didi' (VMALA) who is very rightly known to the world as a 'Flame of Friendship.'

I have only to state the truth that throughout the long - long span of the years of my life I have experienced the tremendous power of our everlasting relationship which has always tried to burn my deeprooted ego and not only showed the path of self-realization but tirelessly put all her efforts to teach me to walk on that path with utmost patience and loving care.

In my profound experience of that great Friendly Power you may find your reflection and may bless yourself with her everlasting friendship. Please accept this gift of love namely 'Flame of Friendship' booklet and join to celebrate the Festival of Friendship which is the essence of VIMALA'S understanding of Global Love.

Let me bow down and confess in Tagore's words :

"Didi ! (Vimala) on many fleeting moments
Thou has marked an eternity."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The whole year has elapsed since the publication of 'Mane Kem Visare Re ?' (How can I Ever Forget ?) Loving instistence of foreign friends is now instrumental in bringing about its English Translation, getting ready for the press.

I am extremely grateful to Prof. chhikaniwala for translating my original Gujarati booklet into English readily and faithfully, inspite of his being hard-pressed by other time-bound assignments. I am also indebted of Shri Shaileshbhai who has initiated the translation.

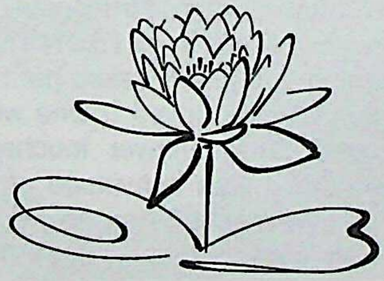
I am realy touched by the simplicity and modesty of learned Prof. Makarandbhai Brahma whose deep understanding of spirituality has helped the booklet a lot. My gratitude for his friendliness is beyond the words.

I am also thankful of Kiritbhai Ravat and Siddharth Ramanuj for this beautifully printed booklet.

The keen interest of Kartikeybhai and Taralaben has showered the booklet with such an affection that the very mentioning of it fills my heart with joy and content.

I hope that the 'The Flame of Friendship' booklet would enable its reader to experience the everlasting friendship of Vimala Thakar.

–Prabha Merchant



Flame Of Friendship

How can I ever forget the 'Flame of Friendship' namely 'Didi' (Vimala) who is not only 'an ever burning light' in my heart, but also 'an ever shining energy' of my whole life, my very being.

Here in these few pages I will try to reveal my experiences of an unique friendship with Her and you yourself will be able to feel the love and ecstasy of our unforgettable relationship. Memory of that auspicious day of 15th June, 1963, just flashes in my mind, of my first meeting with Didi, bringing with it the rare opportunity of spending one week in her company. In the same year Didi had bade good-bye to Bhoodaan movement and come to live in Mount Aabu. I was totally unaware of who she was and what she had been doing and all that. I used to sit with her, listening to her talks on Upanishad, for hours together in Vivekaanad Garden. Her talks reflected her deep knowledge of various disciplines and her intimate acquaintance with many eminent people. I at once fell in love with her innocent brilliance and a childlike simplicity of nature. Her sweet voice and melodious singing of 'bhajans' stirred the depth of my heart. How that one week passed away I did not know ! On the day of our parting, I naturally asked her : "When shall we meet again ?" She replied : "One who really meets, never parts." That answer touched my heart so delighfully that I was convinced of the truth of her words : A true meeting has no parting in it. Before leaving, she also told me : "Seek not, reject not !"

"Prabha, do not turn away or reject what comes spontaneously to you; and never desire or pine for what you do not get !" Both these remarks have been imprinted in my heart. They have illumined my path in life acting as a searchlight, whenever I have had to face challenges or unpleasant experiences in life. My self-education in the school of life began with this. And all this happened surprisingly through a natural friendly relationship ! It was like someone walking ahead, leading by a few steps, speaking to the other friend who was lagging behind, and offering encouragement and advice ! And so it all happened. Her extraordinary nature was veiled, or concealed in a cloack of ordinariness. She never opposed or disapproved of anything I was doing. Instead, she supported me. The rules or pledges I had borne in my mind, were proved futile by themselves to me (during the days I lived with her). The way my understanding developed, those meaningless ideas dropped out of my mind automatically. And how and when it all happened, again, I never knew. Like withered leaves

they fell off the tree.

My frequent journeys to and from Abu began after that. I wrote in a letter : "I have no words to express my feelings towards you." She replied : "When true love touches the depth of your heart, your entire being gets soaked, stimulated and illumined. We are unable to bear its burden and hence we become baffled and bewildered in our attempts at communication. Our sense organs are unfit and incompetent to express our love. And so, much remains unsaid, unexpressed while we are fumbling for self-expression ! As the love becomes more and more intense, our desire to express it also grows less. Experience alone brings satiety. Thus the process of my education continued. But I never felt at all that Didi was moulding me or training me (It all happened so naturally !).

In 1968, I shifted my residence to Shivakuti. It had the charm and glamour of a wilderness in those days. It had no water tap. We had to fetch water from outside. The toilet and bathroom facilities were also constructed outside the building. With increasing financial assistance, more facilities came to be added one by one. God alone knows how Didi herself spent her days ! In comforts or otherwise. She had the knack of turning adversities into advantages (She rejoiced in the wilderness). She used to wear khadi-cloth, spun by her own hands. Her expenses on clothes were negligible. Shivakuti was managed in those days with expenses not exceeding Rs. two hundred.

Didi said : "My life has been like that of a sannyasi living in a forest " (an ascetic living far away from urban areas). In such an environment there was no room for running aways from life's duties, escaping or retreating, indulging in excessive sensual pleasures etc. What one found there was self-restaint, good adjustment-management and harmony ! I had the great good fortune of living with her during the dawn or early days of her own self-development, her spiritual awakening ! Those were the days of the dawn of Her consciousness. When her eyes were closed, and a pen was put in her hand, verses flowed spontaneously. How many saintly souls she must have had contacted in myriad mystic ways ! Soul-filling sweet odours and fragrances then filled the air ! Spirits were stimulated and enticed inside ! A play of talents and energies of a new variety was experienced there, too ! Inspite of being in the midst of such uncommon experiences, our bond of loving friendship, based on equal mutual respect, remained intact ! It overpowered me ! This novel experiment of friendship sometimes became a source of danger, full of risk, for those who lived with her as well as for outsiders or visitors ! Such a bond of friendship, based on a feeling of oneness and independence, full freedom, was difficult for others to understand, endure and digest. It was rather challenging and unimaginable on the part of those who were nurtured on the tradition of unconditional self-surrender, unquestioning obedience ! Those

who were habituated to live in the rut always sought shelter, who sought support from the classics and old tenets, who lived like parasites on borrowed ideals, found it difficult and perplexing to take any independent decisions of their own ! Here one had to choose the road not taken, to go off the beaten track, to make gigantic efforts to chart out a new course. There were no mandates. So one always suffered from a dilemma of choices, or a state of indecision !

Friendship is a bond of mutual support, endorsement and co-existence ! Hence whatever time was spent with her, each moment of it, had to be utilised positively and seriously. Then it could be termed as co-operation. Each moment spent in her company reveald the wisdom of life's wholeness, of absolute oneness, its completeness, consistent entirely ! Hence no moment could be spent but towards self-realization, self-reliance and self-enjoyment. (Each moment was a self-enriching experience !) Otherwise it is not a true expression of companionship. It is a meeting ground of souls interested in enlightenment who took existence positively. Unless we were vigilant and alert in understanding our responsibility as soulmates, the individual values might face the risk of degenerating into verbal values. (It could be a case of paying lip-service.)

The Vimal-conciousness roaring at a pinnacle or topmost level of spiritualism was joyfully participating in the give-and-take of companionship. Her fun and frolic, her childlike innocence, her down to the earth (straight forwardness) as well as disinterestedness contributed to a feast of variegated colours. The nocturnal boat-riding in the Nakhi Lake under bright full moon of Sharad Purnima, the feast of honeyed sweet devotional songs, her sprinkling of water over me through a pipe sent out of a window on the Rang Panchami Day (spring season), the mischief and the childlike play of the days of our companionship, what a sweet period it was ! And her eyes full of love and nectar grew to maturity !

Then came the bright noon of conciousness of her shining sun ! The festival of joy, of self-awareness ! The brilliance of a sword taken out of sheath; Her eloquent fluency of speech – with nuances of meaning penetrating and cutting through one's heart, the edge of the sword that also burnt as it pierced. Such was her Vimal Vaani ! A little slur on our part, even slight sluggishness or indifference or self-indulgence in any manner was surely attacked, and ego or vanity hurt to the extent of being removed. You simply missed the great moment of your life to turn the moment into eternity ! You deliberately let go out of hand the opportunity to realise your supreme self and express it ! And you betrayed life itself !

Her activities during this peak period of life were multifarious, multifaceted and multi-coloured. The holy sparks of her awakened conciousness that fell out remained shinning and scintillating ! They kept her consciousness burning bright alive and acting like a searchlight ! Not a single subject touching human life remained outside her ken, or area of activity. This is her comprehensive, complete, significant contribution to life. Self-restraint, excellent management and harmony were the keynotes of her philosophy of life.

There were many journeys of foreign tours. In India youth-conferences, meditation-shibirs, children's Social Gatherings (Fairs), and Jnaaneshvari Paaraayans ! In Dalhousie she gave her own recitation-renderings of the Upanishads to foreign friends ! There is no counting the gamut of her activities !

Training of the Yogic way of life, and inculcation of culture, perennial values, continued through numerous ways of shibirs, conversations, correspondence, Youth Camps, Meditation Centres, Pilgrimages to holy places, Porbandar anushthan, etc.

She asserted that she would never in any circumsta-nces tolerate or overlook any laps on the part of her inmates in matter of clarity of vision, dis-crepancy in speech, mis-behavior, or dereliction of duty. She was very clear and firm when she said : "Those who live accordingly, honestly are my dear ones (swajans), inmates. There is only one way to reach out to me, and that is through self-realization. The day you discover your true self, you will achieve intensive and intimate co-existence with me !

I have not claimed any quality of saintliness on my part. Nor have I put on such garments, nor established any ashram also. I have realised fully within myself the glory of ordinariness !

I have lived as a commonbeing."

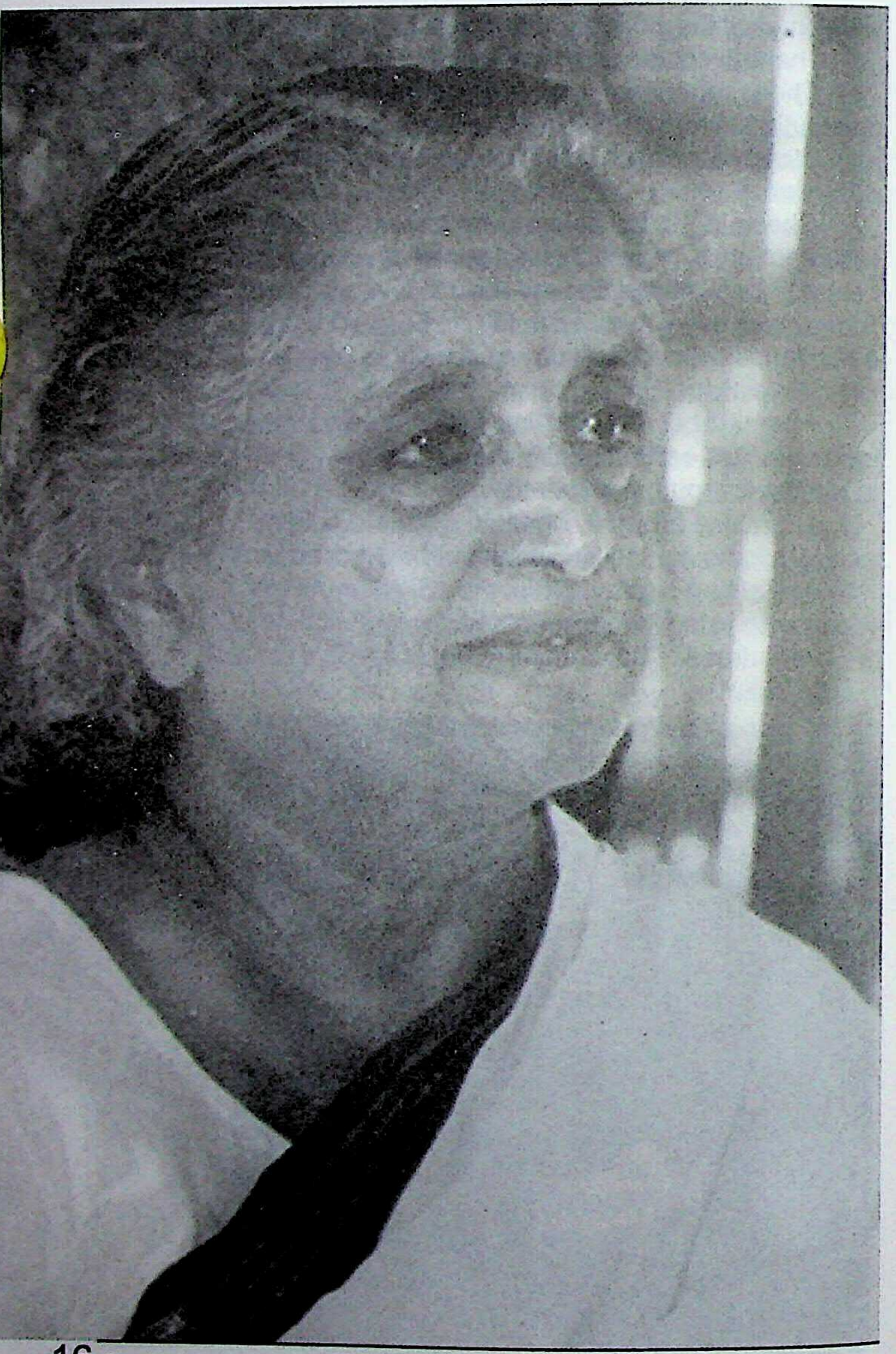
Then came the time of disintegration and dissolution. She wound up her ascetic state. She also stopped going abroad as well as travelling within India.

She said : "I do not know my 'abhikram' (self-willed action). I have achieved a total 'sannyas' or 'renunciation'. I have tied my bond of love with the Supreme. I have obtained it. My life has become a daily dance divine in Vrindavan, a daily festival, an act of love divine."

I remember her words : "Now I no longer belong to this earth. I shall exhaust the number of incoming and outgoing breaths."

"I am like a bird flying high in the air, singing and rejoicing for self fulfilment. The bird never leaves its foot-signs on the sky. Similarly, I too never wish to leave my foot-marks anywhere !"

Hundreds of Salutations to Dear Didi !



How Can I Ever Forget ?

I was summoned to write on the day Didi passed away. Inside me ruled stunned silence and everything was insensible. Every pore of my being was sobbing and lamenting. Life had missed a beat. I was just crying to no end. Even now while I am writing, my eyes are wet and humid. Everything seems blurred, vague and misty. All streams of my consciousness which had been in confluence with hers and were one with her, with the spirit of Vimal, are now eager to be transformed into words. Nights after nights have assumed a festive spirit, an occasion to celebrate, flowing into an unprecedented awakening. Let us all bathe in those sacred streams of saintly spirits and purify ourselves. This is the unprecedented story of a soul's pilgrimage, a story of ascendance of Vimal-consciousness.

Vimal's consciousness came into being during the transitional period between **Durgaashtami** and **Ramanavami**. Her maternal grandfather by intuition named her **Durgaa**. Durga symbolizes the powerful source of infinite energy that destroys the devilish forces and crushes terrorists under her foot by trampling upon the evil-doers. It is the blazing light, the Shining Spirit that frightens and dazzles !

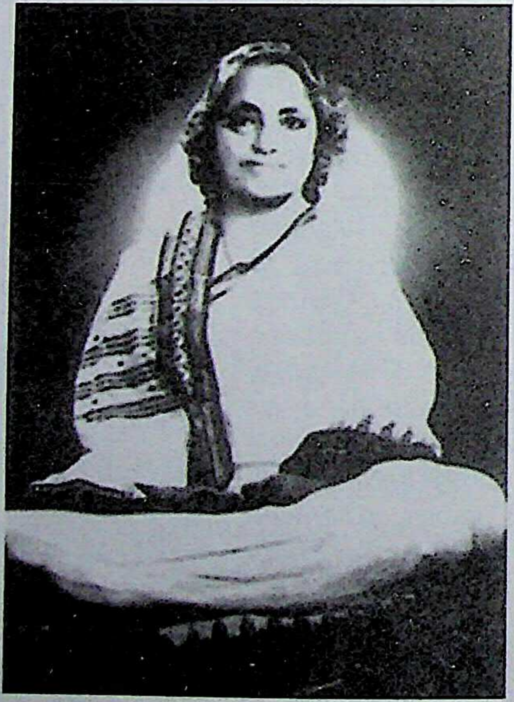
The maternal grandfather was a devotee of Rama, the noblest embodiment of self-discipline; and as Didi was born on **Raamanavami**, Baapusaaheb and Akkaa proposed the name, Vimal. Thus the source of stupendous energy came to be garbed under the sober name of Rama, embodiment of supreme discrection.

Her energy was manifested as outstanding in every sphere of life—be it swimming competition, elocution competition, equestrian events, or in the field of education. Her genius shone everytime. She left no field untouched, but embellished whatever she touched, glorified all that she ever attempted, with the unique gift she had.

Shri Raama

Her consciousness at the time was immersed deeply in the repeated chanting of Rama's name. Her maternal grand-father had poured the nectar into her heart, by taking her in his lap, and chanting melodiously the 'chopai'-verses of the Ramayana. She had the vision of Tulasidas at her young age at the grand father's house itself. Thus, in her very childhood were harmonized the stupendous energy of Durga with the supreme sobering influence of Rama. This spirit of harmony was witnessed as alive, during our journeys together, in all her relationships with human beings. Whenever she found anything improper or undesirable in anyone's behaviour – in connection with thought, speech or action – if anything ever appeared to cross the limits of propriety, decency or decorum, her

frightful eyes at once conveyed her strong disapproval silently but effectively. The concerned individual might be a very affluent or influnential person, saint or indusrialist, statesman or whoever. Her stance would be the same with everyone, no compromise at all. However, I have never seen her falter in giving the deserving their due respect. She has always shown great courtesy in dealing with sadhus, saints, distinguished, realized souls and others. She would always accept a seat lower than that of the revered person in all humility. She has lived in a self- effacing, unassuming manner, with minimum importance to herself. Thus she has taught us in her practical school of life the lesson of lowest self-esteem. While writing this tribute to her memory, the significant lessons of her life are sweetly unrolled, their significance grasped. She has laid the foundation of self-development on the part of those who lived with her, by living an exemplary life.

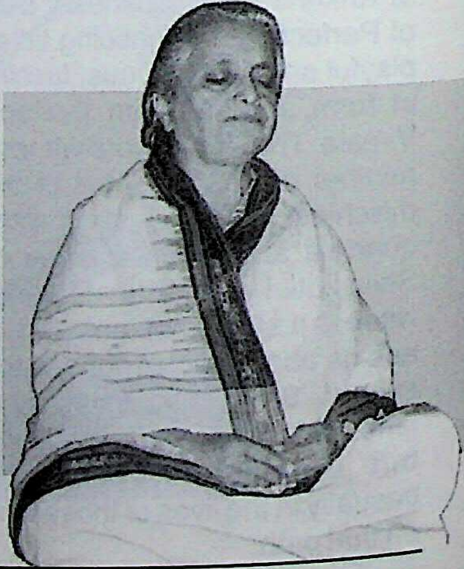


Shri Krishna

Didi had been to Vrindaavan. Hymns to Raama were being sung in a temple of Shri Krishna. How could the mischievious Kahaan accept it ? While Didi began her ritual circumambulation (Pradakshina), she saw the enticing form of child Krishna preceding her, and singing, dancing and clapping hands joyfully ! "Singing the name of Raama, you'll get sour berries, singing the name of Krishna, you'll get butter with suger." Thus the spirit of Krishna consciousness, Emblem of Perfection, the enticing little one, playful and mischievous, fascinating in form, merged with the spirit of Vimala. Thereafter were witnessed a number of episodes, full of pranks, mischievious tricks filled with fun, quarrels and reconciliations etc. in Shivakuti. I was fortunate enough to witness it all. Sometimes, Didi would ask us about our responses to such events. She would even tell us at times that those were not miracles, but ordinary events occuring casually in the lives of those who trod on that path.

Shri Jnaaneshvar and the Jnaaneshvaari Paaraayan

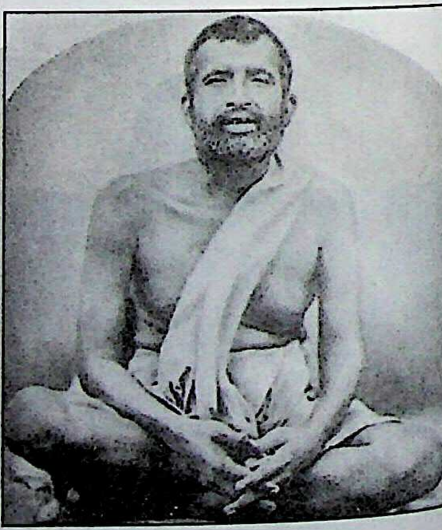
The Maternal Grandfather who had a premomition about his anticipated demise on the day of Ram Navami itself, went himself to Akolaa to hand over personally to Didi, the sole rightful heir, the book 'Jnaneshvari (Jnaaneshvar's commentary on the Gitaa) and the silver boul which he used for partaking of 'prasaad' (sanctified food). Thus she had come upon Saaint Jnaaneshvar, who belonged to the Nath tradition of saints, a special sect. Thus was Vimal's consciousness deeply imbued and impregnated, infused and pervaded by the Avadhoot-type consciousness, a spirit of self-abandon, intoxicated kind of indulgence in matters spiritual, a rough and recluse-type who-cares nature,



devoid of any possessions, resisting even all polite requests or overtures, absolutely unworldly disposition, the unalloyed detachment, selflessness, progenitor of 'Pancham Purushartha (fifth object of human life), and one who glorified the manifested nature by singing its praise, identifying it with nonduality (advait) : "Ye Navhe Navhe Re Maya, Ye Vishva-Prabhuchi Kaya", etc. That conciousness had joined to rejoice in the sweet dance of spring. Jnaneshvar was Didi's choicest companion. Consequently there followed a large number of 'Parayanas" (sessions devoted to reading of scriptures) of 'jnaneshvari'. Thus was Gujarat introduced to and made familiar with 'Jnaneshvari'. The discourses delivered by Vimal in her own unique style of oratory made many people enamoured of her art. Many unbelievable events occurred also during those sessions ('parayanas'), but she never gave such things any importance at all, nor did she allow others to give such importance too. She only said, "Do not be dazzled, do not be impressed." Such events are common and casual for those who tread on the Path of Spirituality. The discourses by her, on the Second Chapter of 'Jnaneshvari' were held at the residence of Vasantbhai Birla in Kolkata from 23rd to 27th November, 1981. By coincidence, Shri Akhandanand Saraswati was also present there as a guest of Birlaji. He used to sit there and listen to her (Didi's) discourses. Didi's speech flowed incessantly. Swamiji would often wipe his tearful eyes with a handkerchief. Didi would insist on his sitting on the podium ('Vyas-peeth') but he would politely decline saying that he must occupy a lower seat as a listener. What a unique confluence of loving noble insistence and of extreme humility !

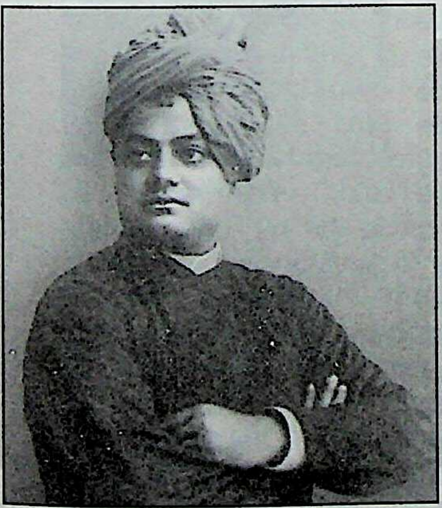
Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda

The maternal grand-father used to take every child of the family before it grew to be five years old to Dakshineshvar to offer obeisance. Thus Didi also, before she saw full five years, was fortunate enough to meet her dearest friend Ramakrishnadev at Dakshineshvar. There, they went to Belur Math also, where she occupied her seat on the cot of swami Vivekananda. The grand-father asked, "What have you done ?" But the swamiji in-charge said : "Don't prevent her. It's her right to sit there !" On many occasions at Shivakuti, thereafter, Paramahansadeva's benevolence had rained profusely. Occasionally, Didi's room would be filled with the delicate soft



Shri Ramakrishna

fragrance of the jasmine flowers, favoured by Thakur. One could even hear Didi's dialogue with him. On being asked the next morning, she would chide me for ears-dropping or spying on her. Her loving togetherness has often waylaid me, just made me mad ! I overstepped boundaries of decorum and behaved as I shouldn't have. My conduct could be unbecoming. My dream of visiting Dakshineshvar in her company came true in 1981. The orange glow on Thakur's seat resembled the emerging glow of the rising sun on the snow-clad bright mountain peaks. Didi was showing me the beloved Thakur's seat, with her hand on my shoulder. How can I ever forget such loving friendship ? Didi observed about her dear friend Thakur : "He had proved in his life that there is no other sacred place of pilgrimage than Man himself. Outward devotion, inward knowledge profound, childlike innocence concealing unmatched maturity–It's not easy to understand such a great soul like Ramakrishnadev." Vivekanand used to say that in order to understand a Vivekanand, we'll need another Vivekanand. I feel that in order to understand Didi we'll need another Didi.



Swami Vivekananda

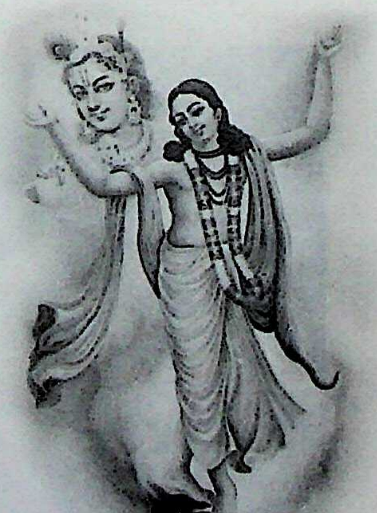
Tukadoji Maharaj

Tukadoji Maharaj

From her childhood days Didi had been in very close contact with Tukadoji Maharaj. He had taught her word 'Jivan Yoga' (Yogic way of Life). The maharaj said, "You have already seen and understood our 'Jivan Yoga' now see the way we rejoice getting ready to celebrate the event of greeting Death." Once Didi had complimented Maharaj on the many occult powers ('siddhis') to his credit, whereas she herself had none, Maharaj responded saying "you are an 'avadhoot', recluse, clad in khakhi, sans all possessions. 'Siddhis are ever at your command, rolling around your feet. You are already far above them'. It was Didi's friendship that brought to me the great good fortune of Maharaj's blessings. I cannot resist a little indulgence in singing : "With you is my cherished relationship."

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

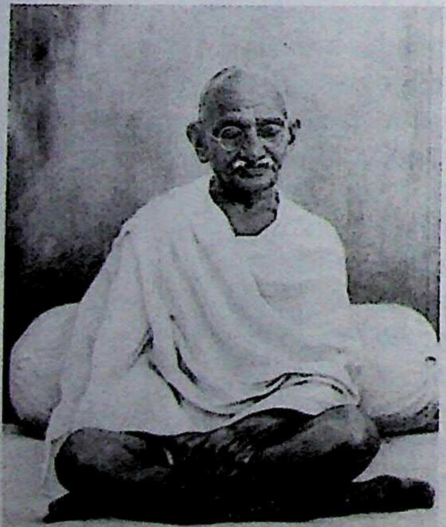
We happened to meet Rev. Nathabhai of Gondal, as arranged by Kishansinh Chavada. Nathabhai had then observed that Didi was a contemporary of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He could visualize Didi's previous births. He expressed his wonder, saying that since she belonged to Bengal, how come she had been born in Maharashtra ! Didi did not allow the tale of previous births to continue. She did not cherish such significance attached to one's previous births. By some strange coincidence, Didi's departure from this world occurred also on the celebrated birthday of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, (in full pomp and glory), with the sprinkling of 'gulal' (reddish powder). What an unprecedented, but pre-destined event ! The festival of her final journey, to join the immortals, also unravelled the mystery. All such events have played a significant, unique role in contributing to the unprecedented pilgrimage of Vimal's Soul to Supreme Consciousness !



Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

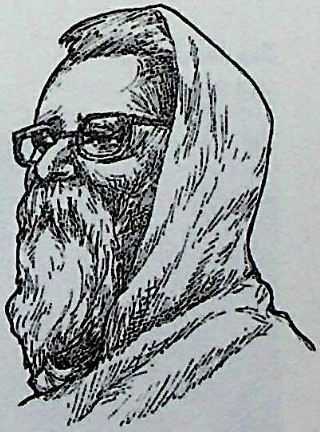
Gandhiji

Vimal's consciousness had been deeply influenced and impregnated by Gandhiji's values of simplicity, self-restraint and penance. Therefore, wherever she came across instances of impurity of means, or unrestrained consumption, she would openly express her disapproval. She believed that the money belonged to the society and any questionable or inappropriate use of the resources could expose one's life to blame or shame.



Vinobaji

To Vinobaji, she was Vimalananda. When she expressed her desire to stay in the Himalayas, Vinobaji quipped that Destiny would catch hold of her and bring her back to the plains. Then Didi had politely implored asking whether it was his boon or bane to her. Baba had replied that she was free to interpret his words. When Didi took her leave of him, he quoted a poetic line : "Parting with the gentle can cause you too much pain." His eyes were full of tears. Saying that he would like her to visit him as often as she liked, he could not restrain himself, and cried loudly. Even though she had such an intimate, personal relationship with Baba, Didi had never accepted his standards and practices.

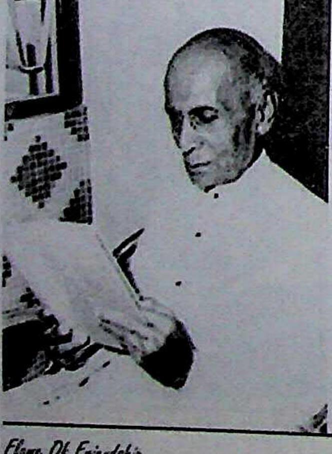


Vinobaji Bhave

Dada Dharmadhikari

Dada Dharmadhikari's spiritual daughter she was. Vinobaji used to call Dada a Yogi of humility, delicacy, decency. Tukadoji Maharaj named him as the Master of ease or effortlessness. Didi said on his first death anniversary, "How can I speak about one who had always kept his presence as a realized soul concealed under the cloak of effortlessness, or natural simplicity, who kept his greatness hidden under the guise of ordinariness ?" Her consciousness had been imbued with such a dada's humility, delicasy and sweetness of nature. It was because of Didi that I had the good fortune of being requited by Dada's love. His fatherly love made my soul smile. Even now, my heart grieves for the loss.

Dada Dharmadhikari



J. Krishnamurti

"In every sphere of life, unconditional freedom is Man's birth-right." This message was spread by Krishnaji to all corners of the world. It removed the layer of ashes covering the fire blazing in Didi's heart and consciousness and produced an explosion. Streams of oratary and communication burst out. Subsequently, Didi's lecture tours followed at home and abroad. In those days she used to go abroad, alone. Many of us, or almost all of us, were ready to accompany her, but she said : "If any one accompanies me, for the first time, it will be Prabha." Thus, by keeping me with her, she gave me a rare unprecedented opportunity of sharing with her an extraordinary experience and learning how she could expose our spiritual vision in a scientific manner in foreign lands. At the same time she also developed in me the talent to give words to my memory. How can I forget the friendship that led me to my destination in a variety of ways ?

J. Krishnamurti

Devaraha Baba

Mahant Shri Avedyanathaji, in the Gorakshanath Temple of Gorakhapur, hailed and greeted her as the Goddess of Learning personified, adored by mankind and also felicitated her by giving a certificate of honour. About the same time, Shri Keshavachandra had organizsd a convocation program at the Mahamana Malaviya organization in Bhatparrani Nagar. He had come personally to tender a loving invitation. With it, he added that Devaraha Baba had also conveyed his wish that Didi should definitely make it convenient to call on him also if she went there. Thus, we had the opportunity to go for the Baba's 'Darshan' also. It was said that he was over 250 years old. He lived all the time on a wooden 'manch' like structure raised above the ground level. It was

erected on a river- bank, close to the river. For food, he took only curds and 'makhana'. He would not allow anyone to approach his raised wooden contrivance. He was overjoyed to see Didi. He called her near to him and touched her forehead with his right thumb. I can never forget that sight. He addressed her as the "Devotional Aspiration of India." He gave her a sacred piece of cloth and said that the Devi should wrap herself with it. "Let her wear it. Cover her up with this silken cloth." He went on reapiting his words that the silkan-garment looked fine on her, and that she was the paragon of love in its highest state, calling her "Bhagavati" (Divine Mother). At last, he spoke Marathi, "I have been blessed, blessed by God". That rare, unprecedented sight gave our consciousness a riotous festival of remembrance, Didi's sweet friendship made me fortunate enough to cherish a number of such occasions of spiritual awakening.

Devaraha Baba

Gopinath Kaviraj

Didi was fondly loved by Gopinath Kaviraj also who introduced Anandamayi Ma to the world. While welcoming Didi, he addressed her as Snehamayi Ma, giving her equal status to that of Anandamayi Ma. He also garlanded Didi with 'mala' (a wreath) made of hibiscus flowers, which he had offered to his own Guru. Didi has showered her love equally on everyone. Everyone felt to be blessed and very fortunate through her experience of being one with supreme Spirit or Cosmic Consciousness.

Gopinath Kaviraj

My heart danced with delight at the sight of such superhuman souls. It felt to be free of all worldly cares and worries. One's purest inner self came to be revealed as a glimpse by removing all outer layers of attachment, requision etc. All this could continue to happen only because of Didi's compassion and grace. It remained so active for a such a long time that I did not even realize when such layers casually dropped off.

The stream of consciouness that took shape as Vimala was enriched by a number of life-enriching streams. She had been fortunate to come into contact with a number of saints, sages and others who were advanced in their quest of Truth by following different paths. Didi often said that since her own 'being' was the fruit of love, and disciplined by a number of saints and realized souls, if she was pricked, she would let out only love and no blood at all. She had been so trained by the loving kindness of saints and learned souls, that anyone who happened to approach her was also loved and trained by the same magic touch. Even a single moment spent in her vicinity was surely turned into her sacred, priceless memory. The moment turned into eternity, an intimation of immortality as it was touched by her all-embracing, spiritual perfection of absolute self-realization. The mystic, profound truth came to be conveyed and communicated in a language easily understood by a layman as well as the masses.

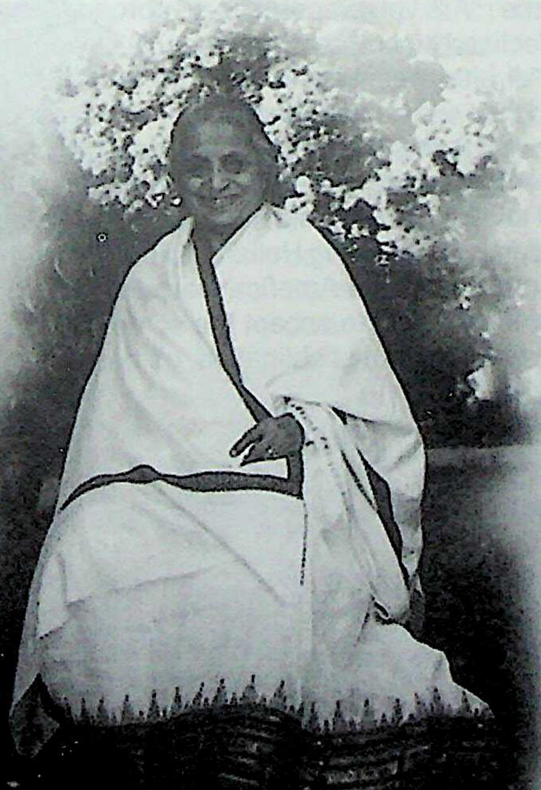
Extremely loving, she told me that she was going to polish me and make me shine to such an extent that there would be nothing but roundless left. It was her sacred speech aiming to eliminate my ego.

Smilingly, she would add that Lord Mahadev had only once taken the poison resulting from 'Samudra Manthan', (the churning of the ocean) by gods(suras) and demons (Asuras), and he came to be called 'Nilakanth', (one with a bluish throat.) whereas, we consume your poison (inadvertent behaviour) daily. We reproach you only once after we suffer from your stings ten times. If we were to indicate or expose your errors each time, you will surely run away from us. That eminent alchemist had surely mastered the clever art of turning poison into nectar, the nectar of Love. She would offer a cup of love to

those who served her with poison. How can I forget the companionship of such an Alchemist ?

This sculptor of life gave me, like an earthen pot, her loving support from inside carefully and tapped the outer surface with her strong hand to give it a shapely form. This sculptor's friendship is a blessed treasure to be cherished for a whole life-time. How can one forget the manifested form ? The dance of such a friendship continues ceaselessly, both in front and behind, at every step, and its rhythmic force inspires me to dance even now. Once she told me : 'For me life is music, life is a song. I cannot afford to press one key in a crooked way, give it more pressure or less pressure. Every step that one takes and every gesture that one goes through adds to the symphony, the melody – enriches it or makes it poor. The search light of attention has to be turned on the quality of one's own life first – how do I live ? Relationship with individuals can never have the elegance of simplicity and spontaneity unless you have an elegance of relationship with things that you use.

Listen to the roaring ocean of memories. Those were my early days spent in her nearness. Some 'Brahmachariji' (a celibate diciple) had come to her through Purnimaben Pakavasa, seeking guidance to solve his own problems. Normally, a man cannot resist the temptation of showing off one's own acquired learning or accumulated knowledge. The Brahmachariji also could not save himself. I at once blurted out : "Alas, to whom are you addressing all this ? She has already gone through it all, absorbed it throughly." The disciple realized his error, and also felt that he had wasted her precious time, by asking questions. After he had left, Didi, the great teacher (of life's values) told me that she of course, knew it all; and yet was listening to him politely. How was it that I (the author) so came to react to it ? Another lady, sitting by our side also said : "yes, Prabhaben, we must not react like this !" But Didi at once told that lady that she had no right to advise others when she for herself also shared the same weakness. (She was also quick to respond like me.) "You may please scrutinize your own mind. If you also react in the same manner, you have no right to restrain others. One must behave and set an example oneself in order to enjoy the right to correct others. Those were the days my life was being moulded and shaped. Not a single day was passed without our learning the ABC of life. (the art of living in Truth.)

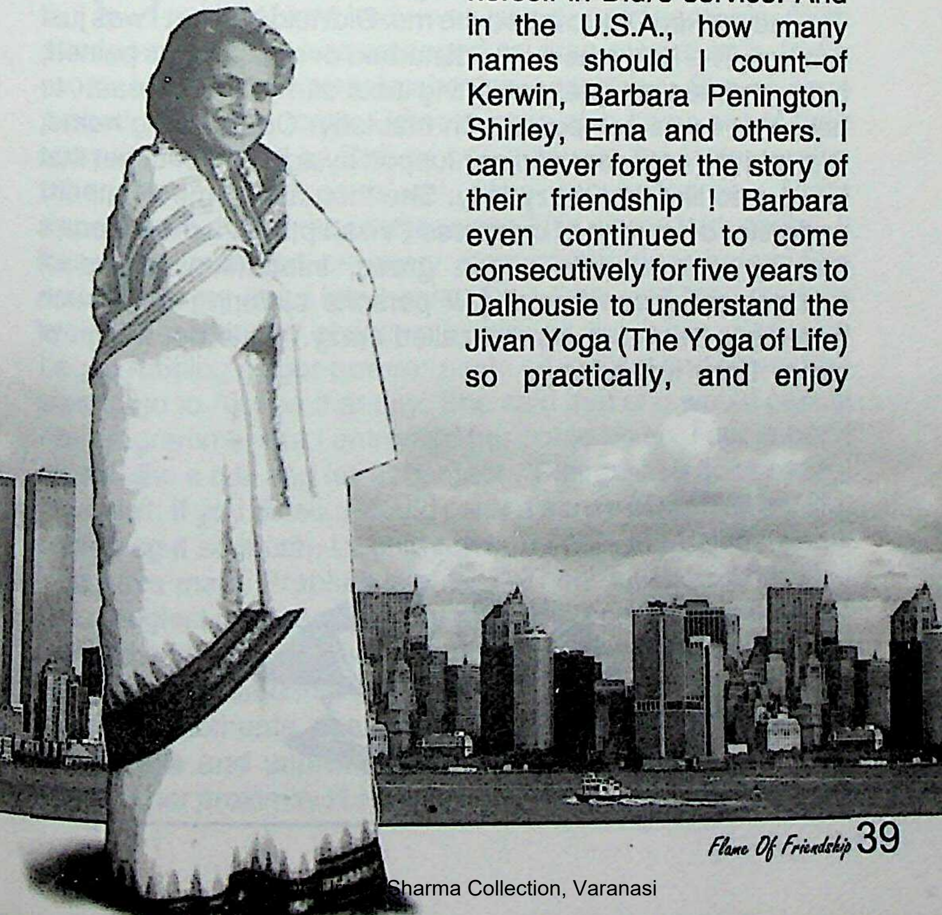


Travelling Abroad

Didi's foreign travels began auspiciously in 1961; but in those days she used to go alone. In 1972 she asked me : "Are you prepared to go abroad along with me ?" At first I declined since I was not financially well-supported or steady. Didi also was getting only her own fare paid. Many others had then even expressed their desire to accompamy her at their own expense. I had no knowledge about some such arrangememt made by her with my younger brother Jagat. Jagat had told her that I would never agree to go abroad at his expense. After our reaching Holland, Didi told me that my fares to and from Europe and America were to be paid by Jagat. I expressed my inability to accept the same. Then Didi said, "If you don't want to incur his obligation, go back from here !" She

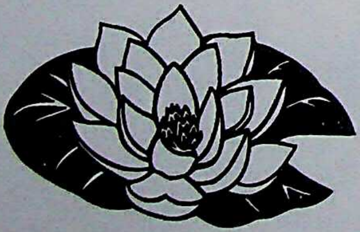
tried to persuade me to gladly accept his help since he was earning enough, and could afford. He was also willing. She also advised me not to be swayed by my ego in not accepting Jagat's help, since his was a relationship of dispassionate and disinterested love. My ego must not be allowed to spoil such a pure loving relationship. Life becomes fragrant when such dispassionate and disinterested love is well implemented in one's worldly life, when it permeates one's daily routine. "Love is the noblest relationship." Such a state of purest love should characterise one's life, it's not to be merely sung about, she made me understand it well.

I was extremely delighted to see the manifest dedication and sense of surrender on the part of Lies, Lau, Georgia, Yaap and Mika in Holland. I was simply speechless and charmed to see the zest and impatient readiness on the part of Ellie Rocket of Switzerland to devote herself in Didi's service. And in the U.S.A., how many names should I count–of Kerwin, Barbara Penington, Shirley, Erna and others. I can never forget the story of their friendship ! Barbara even continued to come consecutively for five years to Dalhousie to understand the Jivan Yoga (The Yoga of Life) so practically, and enjoy



Didi's company all the while. In the end, she said that by living with Vimala she had learned human existence and she added that she would be glad to meet her again, if possible, and if not, she would have no regrets. Barbara and Georgia had thus crossed the boundaries between the east and the west. Obliterating the geographical limits between one nation and another, they have proved beyond doubt that we are all travellers to the Ultimate ! How can I forget the meditation room of Barbara in the upper Bakarota in Dalhousie ? Covered by spotless white linen, spread all over – where none was permitted to enter. It was all the time filled with fragrance emanating from the 'googal' incense. And the memorable letter from Georgia, "To reach Didi wherever she be !" Which did reach her in fact, and was published in 'Biradar'. Her unparalleled relationship with Didi is revealed in it.

And this is about the American city, San Francisco. A couple had come to fetch Didi to go for a walk in National Park. The lady asked Didi to introduce me. Didi told her that I was just like her. The lady was a little disturbed or crazy. I was pained, but restrained my grief not letting it out of my eyes at least , to hear that I was compared with that lady. On reaching home, Didi told me as to why I did not support by agreeing with her that I was also like that crazy lady. She then asked me whether I understood her idea of craziness ('Vikshiptata). It meant one's inability to overcome anger, greed, infatuation, sense of (undue) self-respect, etc. (All persons suffering from such weakness of nature can be called crazy.) It is not a sign of sanity, but of insanity.



Paralysis

Once, in 1998, at 3.30 a.m., after taking my bath, as I was trying to squeeze my washed clothes, the right side of my body was struck with paralysis. With strenuous effort, I just managed to drag myself upto Didi's room. I told her helplessly about my condition. She at once rushed out of her room. Other women also came out of their rooms. I was lifted by Didi on one side and the ladies on the other, and placed on a cot. How can I describe Didi's appearance during the predicament ? No words to describe. It has been imprinted on every atom of my inner being. She would take my head into her lap for a time, and then my legs etc. She continued chanting hymns all the while. She also began rubbing ginger-powder-paste on my feet and soles. She was to go to Ajol on that day. She said that she would cancel her programme. But I entreated her not to do so. I could bend myself like a coil and fell at her feet. "Didi, please don't cancel your visit. If you do so, I would carry a sense of guilt all my life, regretting it so much. I would never be able to forgive myself. You have many Prabhas like me !" Then how could her kind heart neglect my appeal ? "All right ! Do not cry ! Stop weeping ! I will go a few (four-to five) hours later." How can I ever forget such a sweet friendship ?

The moments spent with her are like a history of a memorable and unprecedented education for life. Full thirty years of her proximity ! Living in her vicinity was like walking on the edge of a sword ! And despite the sword's sharp edge, her companionship was full of the sweet loving fragrance of bright and beautiful flowers. How can I ever forget the companionship and sustained love of that enlightened spiritual consciouness ? It has not only enriched my life, but has also become one with it, as a part of my being, my very heart-beats and my breath. How can I separate it from my whole being ? How can I forget the harmony and rhythum of one joint existence ? Since we are thus embodied, we can't help singing about the harmony ! "I cherish this Vraj and won't go to Vaikuntha !"–"I like this earth, and don't want Heaven." Do tell me please how can I meet my Didi there ?

If I just go on writing, there lies an inexhaustible treasure within me. The readers may lose their patience, but my pen will not stop singing Vimal's praise ! "I have no other relationship with humanity except that of love and friendship, it is neither personal nor impersonal; it is only intense and deep. The passion, the concern, the care, the attention – they are the by–products of this love."

Just for fun, she would sometimes call me a 'pundit', a learned writer. In protest I would ask, "Didi, why do you make such fun of me ?" In reply, she would say : "I withdraw my words, if you don't like it. But I am just repeating people's sentiment. I do sometimes enjoy making fun of you. Permit me such luxury at least with you. "It is true that I have acquired 'bandagi', 'ibadat', 'shayari' (prayers, peetry etc.) in her companionship only. I do not disapprove of any such epithets used regarding me, as I do indulge in innocent-like speech. Approval of such light-hearted language used by others for oneself was also Didi's gift to me. It's her blessing. It was she, again, who taught me to love the thorns along with the flowers, or thorns only and not the flowers.

Dalhousie

Dalhousie was Didi's original beloved abode. She loved it more than anything else. In the midst of the Himalayas, she was always very happy. Her spiritual power blossomed fully in all its purity, unconcealed, unveiled. Its elevation and its profundity produce a thrilling experiance in us even now. Her personality assumed a different form in the environment. "This is my abode", she said repeatedly, while choosing 'Shivakul'; though its name was "Lovely View" she named it 'Shivakul'. Every year the summer was spent there. My brother and sister-in law also used to be invariably there every year. Our combined annual pilgrimage to Dalhousie continued for twenty years at a stretch. All of us used to go by bus to Dalhousie, along with Didi. While going uphill, she would point out to me the approaching Himalayas as her dearest friend named Nagadhiraj (the monark of mountains), as she very well knew that I was simply enamoured of the sea as well as the Himalayas. We would collectively clean the whole house. Didi would clean up her own room by herself not allowing strictly any one of us even to enter it. She would get up early at 2.00 a.m. to fetch water. The pleasure we derived out of the hard work as well as the discourses held there was unique. Only those who went through the ordeal could realise the special kind of joy it gave us. We could taste and relish that blissful experience because of Didi's grace alone. Those were lessons in self-discipline. We were all equal there. No

distinction of rich or poor, literate-illiterate, master or servant etc. Every one was just a human being, pure and simple, and nothing else ! The chorus of singing birds at dawn was our morning melody and the millions of stars at night the cause of our keeping vigil.

And then my heart overflowed, spontaneously with powerful feeling : "you are smiling, but we have begun to weep, to catch your smile (in our tears). You are playing in every atom of our being, but we have begun our search here, with lamps lit in our eyes, to reach out to you. Those who are convinced about your Existence, are now moving ahead step by step, towards realization. Your sweet loving eyes are fixed at this game, looking on us with all your grace and kindness ! My heart is getting impatient to reflect your loving gaze. You are enjoying this game of hide-and-seek, but here our anxiety is heart-breaking and could kill us, too. Will this intense yearning of ours make you manifest ?" (This was penned in 1974.)

A Unique Initiation

It was some time in 1975 or 1976. We were all in Dalhousie then. Didi asked for a big copper utensil to be used for sacrificial fire to be lit. Kishorebhai, my brother and sister-in-law, Sajjanbahen, Krishnabhai – all of us were assigned a specific day each to sit with her in the fire-worship. She used to be dressed in silk, and all of us were also required to do the same. That was the time when our names and all such appurtenances were given up and offered in the sacrifice once for all. One's given name is just an appendage to the body, and all its other appurtenances accruring from the name-status etc. like relationships etc. similar to the garments covering a body are just a convenient device for one's

worldly give-and-take, for habitual daily practices. It was a process or ritual aiming at cancelling such relationships, to get rid of the garments worn by the body. It was an auspicious occasion in celebration of one's entry into the palace of determination ! The mandate or motto manifested therein was "Let the river of deeds flow without the Doer ! It was an invitation to remain continuously and constantly in a state of awareness, alert and vigilant as ever. This was an inner pilgrimage, a soul's journey, towards being a Knower, Seer. On Didi's part, it was a tempestuous trip conducted on our behalf, for all of us. One had to run fast enough to keep in step, to match her pace. We had not evolved enough in maturity then to be able to interpret her hidden signals, to deciper her coded hints. As days pass, and we evolve or attain to spiritual growth, the signals get decoded gradually. Mysteries get resolved automatically. Our hearts are filled with a sense of awe and reverence ! Didi, you showered your grace on us, without our asking... Such a loving relationship has now become a way of life, or life itself.

Bhaiya

Kishensinhbhai suffered heart attack in Dalhousie itself. How can we forget that fateful night also ? Didi's frentic rush and agitated state at the time are still felt painfully, upsetting me. Bachubhai Sutaria, Motilal Goswami (freedom-fighter, reputed Ayurvedic practitioner) and I were on our toes in Bhaiya's room. All of us requested Didi to retire to her room. We were prepared to keep awake all through the night. We could call her if at all necessary. Didi could not stand anyone's suffering, even a little headache or sore eyes, etc. whereas this was a case of severe heart-attack on Bhaiya's part ! A nation-wide emergency had been proclaimed at that time. Circumstances could even lead to Didi's return from Dalhousie to lower planes. Didi managed to get copies of Jayprakashaji's lecture printed overnight and also arranged for their quick secret distribution to different parts of the country, and came down from Dalhousie. On the one hand was the crisis in the country, and on Bhaiya's fatal sickness the other ! She took an instant decision to quit Dalhousie forthwith. Then could I see her attitude of aloofness, of absolute non-attachment alive in action ! It taught me the precept : "Do whatever is appropriate, wherever and whenever" !

Mai, Loved by All !

While talking about all of Didi's dear and near ones, how can I forget Krishna Mai ? Didi was Krishna mai's god-given son. She was another 'Lala', (name of young Krishna). She was everything to her. The last hours of Krishna Mai are indelibly etched in my heart. Didi was then out on her 'pilgrimage' of mass-discourses. Didi was expected to go to Indore on 31st Aug. 1980. Mai had intensely desired that she must leave this world before Didi's scheduled departure. Didi was to leave at 7.00 a.m. Mai left the world at 6.15. Didi had arrived at Krushnakuti on the 30th August in the morning to meet Mai. But Mai's condition was critical with fatal respiratory disorder. Mai prayed to Didi : "Deva, make my breathing normal." Didi put her hand gently on Mai's back, and moving it softly, consoled Mai. "You are well aware, Mai, that all of us have to suffer the bodily pain that destiny

brings. Even your 'Didi' is not free from it. All great souls, like Ramkrishna Dev, Raman Maharshi, Tukadoji Maharaj, or Krishna-Prem are subject to this painful process of suffering caused by diseases. Then how can we claim any immunity, or become exceptions ?" The same evening when Didi called on Mai, she said to Didi : "you are untouched by the clutches of time. Now you must first set me free from this trouble, and then only you may go anywhere you like." Then Didi put her hand on Mai's head and pathetically implored the Lord : "O Gopal, O Govind, your Mai is now tired of such suffering, she now wants to be liberated from the cage of her present body. O Hari, I am sure you are listening to your devotee's earnest prayers !" This happened on the 30th of August, at 8.00 p.m. And on the morning, about day break of 31st August the devotee discarded her mortal frame and went to join the immortals to be one with her Gopal.

An eminent individual associated with the film Board had invited Didi to dinner. Didi told me : "You must also come with me". I said : "I can't". Didi inquired : "Why do you refuse to accompamy me ? Do you refuse because the person concerned has a questionable moral record ?" And then she added : "We never look into anyone's outward appearance, or physical existence, we enter straight into their souls".

"All souls are made of the same stuff.
But their actions determine their apparent differences;

The curtain of birth and death covers us all,
You alone are the Player who plays".

"We see the same God living in every one". I had refused to go because in those days I was not going anywhere outside for meals. But then I came to learn : The same God inhabits every human being as He dwells in you. Hence never try to judge others by means of your own standards. If you still do so, you will only do injustice by ignoring the live God within the concerned individual. The same God lives in all of us, in all living beings. Saints continue to pray to Him, for such realization only". *"O beloved Lord, let such a day dawn, when I behold you everywhere, let such a day dawn !"*

Such was the cherished, valued treasure of your sweet inspired speech from dawn to dusk, imbued with love. In it one experienced the tender touch, full of warmth of the rays of the rising sun, the festival feast of the seven colours of the lovely rainbow, the sweetness of a cool moonlit night, the splendour of the monsoon clouds, the dazzling brightness of lightning flashes, the fragrance of flowers and the tender loveliness of the Parijat blossoms. This is not a poet's fancy, or one's idle imagination. It is the story of life lived in your company. It is a concrete proof or heart-felt conviction of being one with you. When the fire of divine yearning flares up into rising flames in life, flowers begin to bloom and spread their fragrance, out of that fire, and make our lives also fragrant. This is the

mysterious exposition of the meaning of living with you. It unveils the mystery of our shared existance. My life continues to rejoice in the memory of moments filled with sorrow. Didi, I am not just singing praise of your manifested existence. I am not engaged in prayers to you. I am experiencing a real rebirth.

All of us are almost infatuated, enamoured of your love, just on the verge of insanity. Everyone is seeking to express his love in his own typical fashion. I am simply dumb-founded seeing this game of communication. We approve whole-heartedly of this outer layer acting as a barrier to your art of communication and we also approve of your 'Leela' or Divine Play and art of innocent love. Even in it we perceive the same piercing brilliance, the same penetrating insight of your loving glances. Maybe, at a proper time, the same penetration will remove the barriers, all the outer layers, and reveal to us the blessed inner Reality. And we are rightly convinced, we fully trust that the Revealation will be there !

Prabha's life is the story of this embodied love, manifestation of Reality. But Didi herself has taught me to act as a witness to the Realization of the unmanifest. Months ago, she herself has said : "Prabha, continue to live in the spirit of a witness". Now she herself is poviding me with the needed strength to continue to live as a witness. In her very words lies the power to motivate and activate us to do so !

In one eye roars the ocean of profound sorrow at Didi's disappearance, the form vanishing from our vision, and in the other is the overflowing tide of joy of oneness with the formless ! It's quite a festival of joy and sorrow combined on the soil of one's consciousness. It's a rare occasion of union of joy and sorrow. This union is pregnant with promise, giving birth to a sacred stream of bliss of joy and cheer, rejoicing with its own melodious music, and flowing on and emitting bursts of laughter. Now this melody thrills and excites every atom of my being. Eyes overflow with ecstasy. Every particle of existence is as it were squeezed to pour out its essence into it. What a sweet sorrow of mixing agony and esctasy !

Such an experience was truly lived through during Didi's last days. What a magnificent, aristocratic life it was ! What wealth divine, unseen on earth ! She has a gorgeous, grand, leonine personality, inaccessible to unwholesome, ugly elements; no one dared to use any inappropriate word or unsuitable language in her presence ! During her last days we had heard her say that we were all her own embodied fate, we were her own destiny. She had the infinite energy to discard it

all and break out of it too, if she wished, but she would not like to interfere with Nature, it was not in tune with her achieved status. A realized soul would not tamper with Destiny, or meddle with the unknown. She desired no short cut, but wished to live through whatever was given by Fate. Then I remembered Vivekanand. When he saw an old ruined temple of Ma (Divine Mother) in the Mayawati Ashram he said : "I will get this temple built anew." Ma said : "Who are you to get it done ? So many such temples have been ruined already, and how many of them could you reconstruct, rebuild ?" I remembered Mahavir as well, who did not meddle with the wheel of Time despite his infinite prowess. I also remembered those last moments of Jesus who wondered for a while what those ignorant souls were doing. The next moment the Light of Knowledge flared up : "Let Thy will be done !" "Alas, from where does this Entity called "I" come from ?" In a similar manner our Didi by her own living example, taught us how to lead a life of detachment and equanimity.

On the 11th, Didi discarded the worn out cage of her mortal frame and rushed out to meet and embrace the Ultimate, the Supreme ! On the 13th we arrived in the Shakti Peeth, (centre of Divine Energy), Ambaji, to offer at the Supreme Power's feet, the priceless 'relics' of our dear Didi. And an unprecedented event occurred there. On our approaching the gate, the massive doors were thrown open automatically. Bugles were sounded. It was as if the Primal

Power of Ma Ambaji, embellished in all her glory, decorated with all the proverbial sixteen arts, rushed out to greet and absorb in Herself Her own other form. Time and place stood still, or say, they sunk into oblivion. The way the Primal Energy proceeded with rythmic steps, moving melodiously, reverberates still in my memory; I almost hear the sound of her anklets. As we went ahead, doors opened at their own instance, one after the other. No one was there except the Madhavapur family and Raju Thakkar. We only stared and stared at whatever was happening before us, in broad daylight. We entered the 'Sanctum sanctorum' and offered the relics to the smaller image of Ambaji. "Aarati' (waving of lights) was performed around the relics. 'Tilak' (red mark) was applied on everyone's forehead. The sacred garment ('Chundadi') was also offered. Ma Ambaji's 'holy sandals' (Paduka) were placed on everyone's head. Sanctified food was distributed. How it all happened, no one could keep count of, none could account for it all. Yes, but it is true, beyond doubt, that it all happened before our open eyes. We only stared and stared. When the Great Soul awakens,

Vimlaji with Swami Brahmavedantji and Ramilama in Madhavpur, Ghed, Gajarat.

the impossible becomes possible, and it happens all naturally, as if by itself, and Nature abandons its own laws and discipline to worship the Three Supreme Principles of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, (Truth, Benevolence, and Beauty). Many such things happened, but how can I command the ability and competence to adequately express in words that event ?

In Ambaji itself, someone was worshipping, sitting near a fire, since long probably, Didi's chosen friend, divine comrade, Ramakrishnadev. We happened to go to his abode. Right in front of the entrance we could see a large portait of Vivekanandaji, calling "Arise, awake...!" Didi's voice was heard as it were ! Inside was Ramakrishnadev's photograph with his right hand raised to bless. How many signals were thus revealed and their significance explained ! We all stood with lowered heads. And we came to realize the mystery of both the Form and Formless being revealed as Extraordinary ! We had often heard it and sung it too. Now, for once, it came to be revealed, and realized by us. What an unprecedented coincidence ! Didi revealed all such mysteries even as she left.

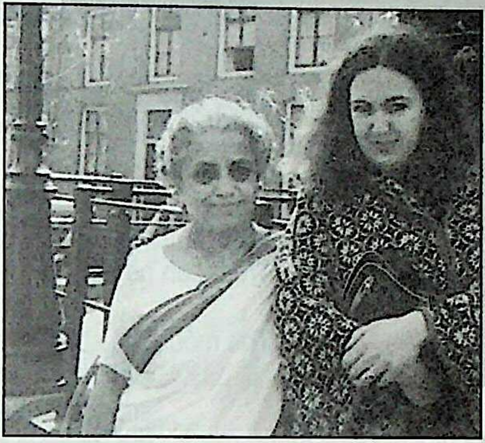
It was all as it were pre-planned. Reason or logic has no entry. They are barred here. Didi got us rightly established in full faith in the Formless, by calling it a day, closing her game of the Form ! (As she folded up the play of Form, she propounded our faith in the Formless !)

On the 20th we went to Nareshvar, with the pot of Didi's relics, to the bank of the holy river Narmadaji. Right since we embarked in the taxi, Urmilaben's recitation of the Gita, the Bhagavat and of the stotras (devotional hymns) went on continuously, and we had recollections of the 'Dhyan Shibir' (Meditation sessions) held in Nareshvar. It was Rang Avadhootaji's 'Sadhana-Bhumi', (place of penance), and abode of Realization ! His "Datta Bavani" (a hymn of 52 verses) was inspired there. It was here that Avadhootaji had invoked and implored Revama (the River Narmada) to assume a genle milder form, singing "Gayati Reva Reva Madhuram..." meaning, "The Reva sings melodiously." It was here that Didi had maintained that in true friendship selflessness prevails, and not material considerations. In Nareshvar itself she had made clear her position about true friendship on the basis of disinterestedness. She had observed, "In the Jnaneshvari' (Gita commentary) Shri Krishna tells Arjun that there is only one great objective behind their friendship : know thy own intrinsic interest. If you realize it, my joy will become a hundred fold." Didi said : "Your relationship with me is also equally unique." Urmila let Anjali offer the pot of relics to the rushing waters of the Reva from the boat while chanting the sacred verses in the appropriate sacrificial manner. What a rare occurrence ! Revama stepped out to welcome Didi ! I admit I lack the competence to express this event in appropriate words. I simply bow down, and stop here. I am so very fortunate that Didi so kindly provided me with the opportunity to learn to become insignificant in the festival of her final departure.

Vimalaji's View of LIFE

The river-bed is not born before the river flows on it. The bed comes into being as the river flows, not before. Such a bed can be called a canal. The stream that breaks and penetrates through the mountain rocks makes its own path-way or bed. The stream or rivulet gradually assumes the form of a river, but it has no such timebound, fixed or planned time-table.

The life that follows a heart's inspiration or is so governed by intuition is also like a river. But when such intuition gets a pure, self-less unmotivated intellect as its companion, life becomes all the more colorful,



UTRECHT - With Georgia Niesten

spreading its unique fragrance and becoming amply enriched.

Vimala's life has embraced the entire cosmic consciousness, all absolute existence. Her spiritualism is all-inclusive, all-embracing. Apart from its scope for compartments, there is no division in it. It is a single front, One only, and based on the will to live with introverted outlook and vision turned inside. The outer world is ruled by the power of God, the Supreme Being; the inner world is soaked by spiritual estasy. There is life and there is a Vision too ! But it is like the lovely flowers strewn around the trunk of a 'Parijat' tree. Looking like the blossoms falling from a Borsalli tree.!

It is a vision of life spreading its fragrance in the air all around and being in the process dissipated and consumed.

It is not a vision of life that gets trapped in the frame-work of principles, acts as a hurdle in the path of new visions lying still in the womb of future, not a vision that lies imprisoned in the bottle of empirical endorsement, or evidence.

Just as the river that meets and mingles with the sea loses its own name and identity, it might also apply to Vimal's vision of life, perhaps !

The Sacred Lamp

They Say
Truth should not be harsh
It should be gentle and pleasing!

What is the basis to assume that
Truth can be harsh?

The mountain streams tumble down
cleaving the rocks on the way
so, would you say -
the water is harsh?

The faintest flame of
the smallest lamp
shatters the darkness of ages
so, would you say -
the light is harsh?

The innocent smile of the tiny-tot
softens the hardest of
the adamantine hearts
so, would you say -
the golden smile is harsh?

Truth just cannot be harsh
Truth is neither harsh nor cruel
Truth is neither pity nor sympathy
Pity grows
at the edge of harshness and
Sympathy creeps
in the shadows of cruelty

Truth is light
Light from that sacred lamp
lit
by Love

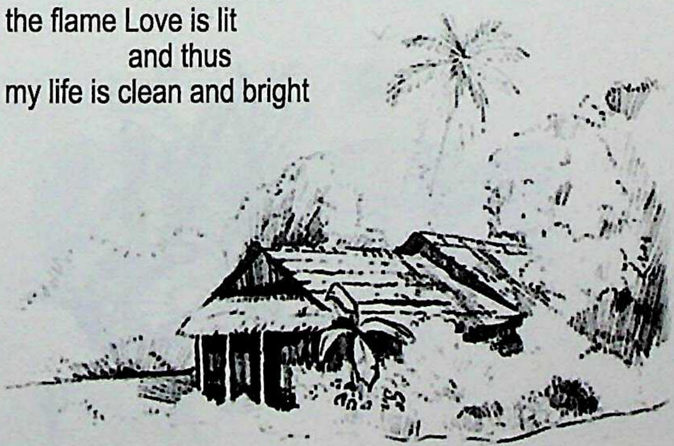
The Flame of Love

The religions for me
have lost their moorings and
the moralities
have lost their legs
and thus
my life has been a-religious and a-moral

The Paths have all slipped away and
all the 'ways' have gone to rest
and thus
my life has been moving
without a Path and without a Way

Time has come to a standstill
and space is no more
and Thus
my life has been flowing
beyond space and time

The current of conditionings
has dried up
the bondage of duties
has vanished
the flame Love is lit
and thus
my life is clean and bright

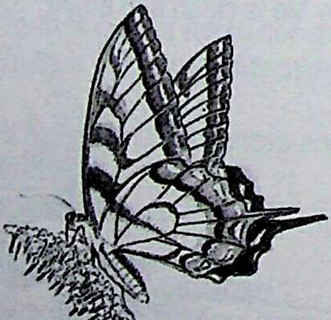


The Friends

Again the clouds gather and
decorate the skies with
the grey canopy,
bringing brimfully
the waters from the seven seas
And the parched earth
spreading its arms
in wait to receive
The thirsty woods
gazing upwards in deep hope
And the winged ones
in their sweet voice
calling out in unison

'Come ye'
our dear friends
Come down in torrents
delay it not
'Come ye', dear friends
shower thine gifts.

Mount Abu
13-7-1989



Loosing the Ego

The tavern of the ego has been robbed
The building of 'me 'ness has collapsed
The roof of 'mine 'ness is blown away
The walls of dogmas are asunder
The mirror of ideals is shattered

The whole of 'me' is looted (because)
in all the multiplicity
of 'things mine'
was the abode of the 'me'

In the looting away
of all the 'mine'
has been the death of the 'me'

Now who shall clim immortality?
Who shall now raise the empty towers
of 'Being-ness'?

Gone are the stores of all intoxicants
I myself am lost. there was nothing
to remain as remnants - thus
what now is, is nothing!

The Flowering

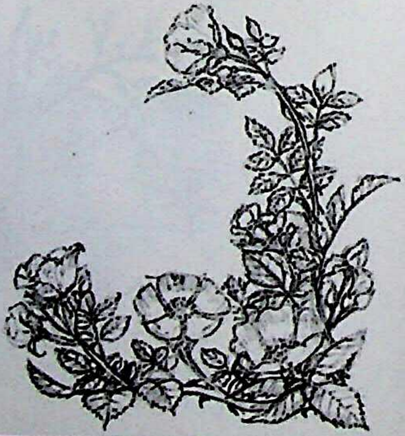
Does a floweingr need any narration?

The Explosive Event of
Flowering
Awakens Silence
into Eloquence

It is That
Eloquent Silence
which
Communes
through these words

The Communion
between
One who is a novice in the realm of
Poetry and literature but
is passionately in Love with life
and
her friends, intimate and dear

May these innocent words
please them



"I have come to wake you up from your slumber, to shake you up from your self forgetfulness.

Please listen to me, awake, arise. The light of life is burning bright, open yourself up to it. Stand up right, be a human being."

With all alertness and humility of enquirer, I am exploring a new way of friendly communication and communion with the people.

I have seen that truth can be lived in the midst of people. Humility can be lived in the midst of arrogance and knowledge. I have seen that people listen to a commoner who lives among them as a common person. The truth is Vindicuted.

My job is over.

– *Vimla Thakar*